

I'M A Junior Mayor

Ten-year-old Abeer Dey is helping his community.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to run your city or town? I'm getting the chance to find out! I'm the junior mayor in Gaithersburg, Maryland. That's where I live.

Each year, Gaithersburg holds an "If I Were Mayor" contest for fourth-graders, and I entered last spring. I wrote an essay to the city council telling them what I would do if I got the job. My dream is to prevent bullying in schools. My plan involves creating stations where kids could go to report bullying.

When I found out that I had beat out more than 50 kids for the job, I was surprised and excited. In June, I attended a ceremony with Gaithersburg



Mayor Jud Ashman. I was sworn in to office by taking an oath. That means I promised to carry out my duty as junior mayor until my term ends next May.

Keep It Local

Working with Mayor Ashman has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I am learning so much from him, like how to respectfully share my ideas for improving our city.

I also get to attend events. At

a local fair, I greeted people along with the mayor and other officials. I've even been interviewed by a news reporter!

Being a junior mayor has shown me how important local government is in solving community problems. If you have an idea about how to help your town, try to **implement** it by getting the support of your local government.

WORD TO KNOW

implement *verb.* to put a plan or law into effect

Courtesy the City of Gaithersburg (Abeer Dey, Jud Ashman), Shutterstock.com (all other images)

Here's a look at some of the leaders at each level of government in the U.S.

LOCAL

An important leader at this level is a mayor, who often works with a group called a city council. They make decisions about a city or town, such as how much to spend on libraries and parks.

STATE

One top state leader is the governor, who works with state lawmakers. They write ideas for new state laws, and the governor says yes or no. These decisions, like how long the school year is, affect people in a state.

NATIONAL

The president is a top leader at this level, along with members of the U.S. Congress. They write ideas for laws and the president can sign them into law. One national law says that cars must have seat belts.